



In Focus

Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

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November 2006

Heartwarming hand-warmers:



Commissioner Brenda Harvey (center) gets a hand from Karolyn Marston (left) and Rachel Hoar (right), two of the DHHS employees who knitted mittens for the Department's Head Start Party mitten drive. See story in the News and Notes section, page 6.

Adoption Takes Center Stage At Children's Museum in Portland

*More than a dozen adoptions finalized in one day
during National Adoption Awareness Month*

A mounted moose head and a full-wall mural featuring Maine wildlife provided the backdrop for Cumberland County Probate Judge Joseph Mazziotti. This was no typical courtroom, but then again, this was no typical day on the bench.

Judge Mazziotti greeted families at the Children's Museum of Maine's Ranger Station on November 13, making family dreams come true by finalizing the adoptions of more than a dozen children.

"It is so heart-warming to see so many children find homes," said Virginia Marriner, Acting Director of Child Welfare Policy and Practice at the Department of Health and Human Services. "The extended family is here and part of the celebration as well. One of the best things about this event is it brings many people together – the Department, private agencies, the Judge and his staff, the caseworkers and the Museum staff – they all

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Newsletter Sports New Look, Publication Schedule Set

This month, the Department of Health and Human Services' *In Focus* sports an entirely new look. The goals of the design are to be more eye-catching, to help the reader navigate the newsletter and to begin the process of creating a 'look and feel' for the Department's communications vehicles.

In Focus will continue to contain regular features, but is also looking to share more information from around the state. You'll see many of these short items in the News and Notes section. Most of these stories are contributed by staff in various offices. If you'd like to have your item considered, please e-mail them to John Martins, Director of Communications, using the deadline schedule below.

In Focus publishes the last Monday of the month, 11 times a year, with a combined summer edition published in August. Since the Christmas holiday falls on the last Monday of December, the newsletter will publish on Friday, December 22 instead.

If you have information you'd like to have considered for publication, the deadline for each month is as follows: December 6; January 15; February 12; March 12; April 16; May 14; June 11; August 6.

*In Focus continues its profiles of members of
the Commissioner's staff this month with*

Lucky Hollander, Director of Legislative Relations

If you ask Lucky Hollander to explain her job in lay terms, her response is clear and concise. "I am the liaison between the Department, the Legislature, the Governor's Office, and community stakeholders, for legislative and policy initiatives."



Lucky Hollander

While the explanation sounds simple, Lucky's job is as multi-faceted and complex as a cut diamond. Along with monitoring all legislation, she connects with those who submit ideas to see where their efforts stand to "minimize surprises."

"There's lots of discussion at every stage of the legislative process: from the time the idea for a bill is formulated, through its drafting and printing process and finally to developing and delivering testimony and negotiating a compromise with all the stakeholders whenever possible." Lucky said. "At the end of January, things really heat up, because you want to meet new legislators, get familiar with all the new committee members and find sponsors for our bills quickly and strategically. It's about building relationships both in the legislature and with key stakeholders, building alliances around issues that matter to us."

A native of Connecticut, Lucky began her career in Child Protective Services in Illinois and confesses that she's done probably 'every job possible' in Child Welfare. She came to Maine 20 years ago as the Director of the Cumberland County Child Abuse and Neglect Council, where she managed all advocacy and prevention initiatives. The Council merged with Youth Alternatives in Portland, in 1997.

She wasn't really looking for a job when she was approached by then-Commissioner Jack Nicholas and then-Deputy Commissioner Mike Hall to join the Department.

"I was intrigued (and more than a little surprised!) that they would consider recruiting me," Hollander said. "I believed this was a really historic time for the department with the major systems changes that were happening both with the creation of the Department of Health and Human Services and with child welfare reform. They

wrote a job description that reflected so much of what I could do—I couldn't say no!"

Throughout the year, Lucky works to keep stakeholders and organizations connected and to know what issues may be emerging that need our attention. She works closely with Office Directors and advocates and tries to be sure staff always has a "heads up" when there may be unintended consequences of any of the work being done in the community. Likewise, the staff is really committed to communicating issues it thinks may come up in the legislature or the media that should be known about in the Commissioner's Office or in the Governor's Office. Before the beginning of December, Lucky needs to be sure that any bill the Department is introducing (about 40 of this writing) meets the submission deadline. DHHS introduces — by far — more bills than any other Department. After the Legislature and the committees are seated, the fun begins — as does the on-going education, tracking any bill that may have implications for the work done by DHHS Offices (the last Biennium that was about 350), reading, editing and reviewing Office Directors' testimony with the Governor's Office analyst assigned to DHHS. She also works closely with stakeholders to be sure an agreement can be reached whenever possible.

"Some legislators or community members do not fully understand that when they put in a bill, they are actually attempting to change the law. There are many bills introduced by those who may not know the complexities of an issue, or the potential unintended consequences.

"I would say that one of the biggest surprises in this job for me is that I feel like we stop more potentially bad policy than we pass good policy—which is not a bad thing, but it was not what I expected."

Lucky said the most enjoyable part of her job is reaching out, building relationships and helping to solve problems. She admits that the challenges, at times, are the misperceptions associated with the Department.

"I see how hard everyone in this department works and the posturing at times, is very unfair. Our Department operates under the notion of 'Assume Best Intentions.' Often, others don't do that with us."

Lucky says she loves spending time with her "fabulous family," including her husband and three grown daughters. A resident of Portland, she enjoys connecting with friends, reading, kayaking, gardening and going to the beach in all seasons — generally, being outside as much as possible.

From Fostering to Adoption: One Family's Story

Leo and Cindy Gibbons have known Fred and Adrian since age 2.

On November 13, the twins officially became a part of the Gibbons Family.

It all started with bus rides to church at the young age of 2. Twins Fred and Adrian, along with two older brothers, also twins, boarded a bus each Sunday to attend the Open Bible Baptist Church in Bath. They boys were well-cared for there and the church offered some respite to the parents.

That's when Leo Gibbons first met the boys. "He came home one day and told me "There's these two sets of twins and you've really got to meet them," said Cindy Gibbons, reflecting back nearly 12 years. "The Church built a relationship with the parents, who knew their children were safe."

After engaging with Fred and Adrian and the older twins, Leo and Cindy became fond of the boys. When they were around age 8, Cindy saw a change – the boys were acting up. "We learned at that point that their mother had left them and we felt these guys needed a little TLC," Cindy said. "We took them home after church for a Sunday dinner."

From there, the relationship grew, and Leo and Cindy began providing foster care for Fred and Adrian, as well as one of their older brothers. While fostering the boys, the Gibbons learned that Adrian and Fred suffered from Retinitis pigmentosa, an inherited eye disease that will likely render them blind by their mid-20s.

"We found out about five years ago, but we had already fallen in love with them," Cindy said. "We became foster parents because of these guys."

The decision to move from foster care to adoption came recently, after attending training offered by the Department on the positive effects



First Family Photo: The Gibbons Family posed for a photograph after the adoption was finalized. Pictured, from left: Judge Joseph Mazziotti, Leo Gibbons, Fred, Adrian, Cindy Gibbons, and Angel.

Riding the Rollercoaster of Change

by Sharon Sprague

Having been a Regional Director with responsibility for Mental Retardation, Children's Behavioral Health, and Adult Mental Health, it was with much heartache that I let go of this management responsibility when line authority for staff was transferred to Central Office on September 19, 2005. The transition was difficult, as we tried to define the new regional position with little success. Many times it felt demeaning and at times, I admit that I felt a loss of self-esteem.

In December of 2005, I was given the opportunity to assume the position of Acting Director of Adult Mental Health. With much trepidation, I accepted, while the search for a permanent director ensued. The positive changes during these five months continue to have a profound effect on my work today.

I reported to Commissioner Harvey and was given ample opportunity to spread my wings and learn new things – sometimes the hard way. I became more closely connected with managers who work in the Central Office and my respect for their work ethic grew tremendously.

While I found myself learning the hard way, I also found support, which began right at the top. There were times when I messed up – how many other managers did not have their budgets add up!!?? But the Commissioner consistently took the time to listen, teach and give me a taste of what true leadership means. Because of these positive interactions and the sense of team, I began feeling the same kind of

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National Research Expert Visits With Department's Clinicians

Dr. Vincent Felitti discusses the link between Adverse Childhood Experiences and increased health challenges later in life

On November 3, members of the Children's Cabinet, including First Lady Karen Baldacci, joined the Department's clinical practitioners, research staff and members of the Executive Leadership Team to meet with Dr. Vincent Felitti of the Kaiser Permanente health system in California.

Dr. Felitti, who was the keynote presenter at a forum in Bangor the following day, presented research findings on how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) can be directly linked to chronic health conditions in adulthood. Some conditions he cited included physical and emo-

tional abuse, mental illness in parents, alcohol and drug use in parents, and having a parent incarcerated.

The prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences has been an initiative that is grounded in the work of the Department of Health and Human Services. From home visitation to the child welfare reform stressing that every child has a family of their own, to the children's trauma system of care project, the Department continues its work to minimize the effect of adverse experiences in childhood.



Dr. Vincent Felitti shared his research on Adverse Childhood Experiences with First Lady Karen Baldacci, members of the Department of Health and Human Services Leadership Team and clinical practitioners earlier this month

NAMI Maine Taps Department Duo As Heroes in the Fight Award Winners

The National Alliance on Mental Illness recognized two Department of Health and Human Services employees as Heroes in the Fight at a dinner at the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport October 23.

Luc Nya, Multi-Cultural Coordinator, was recognized by NAMI Maine Executive Director Carol Carothers for "his tireless persistence in assuring that Maine's mental health service system is welcoming to people from other cultures, and that we are effectively assisting people, many with significant trauma histories."

Nya began his work as an intern for the Department in 1999, helping to create lasting and successful multi-cultural mental health coalitions.

David Proffitt, Superintendent of Riverview Psychiatric Center, was described as a "man who clearly loves a challenge" by

Carothers, referring to his lengthy history of working in large psychiatric institutions in Montana, Wyoming and Arizona, before coming to Maine.

Carothers spoke of great improvement at Riverview, and praised Proffitt's leadership since his arrival in 2004.

"Riverview has undergone profound and positive change," she said. "Someone recently said about David: 'He really cares and his passion is evident. His commitment to the people served,



Luc Nya (left) and David Proffitt were named Heroes in the Fight by NAMI Maine at a dinner last month.

their families, their advocates, and his faith in recovery-oriented treatment keeps him focused."

NAMI Maine presented a total of seven awards that evening.

News and Notes from Around the State of Maine



Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center staff Joni Crossman (left) Carolyn Dimek (right) greeted visitors and provided information about nursing services at the Mental Health Awareness Fair October 26.

Mental Health Awareness Fair A Success

- The Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center hosted a Mental Health Awareness Fair on Thursday, October 26. The goal of the fair was to educate consumers, family members and the public about the mental health services provided by DDPC and other fellow mental health providers from the greater Bangor area and beyond.

Established in 1990 by Congress, the first week of October is designated as Mental Health Awareness Week. This year's theme was **Building Community, Taking Action**. Recovery from mental illness requires community action, understanding, and teamwork. The fair ran from 1 to 4 p.m. and allowed everyone plenty of time to visit each vendor and learn about services. Not only was this a great education tool for consumers and family members, but it served as an education between vendors as well. Some of the vendors included Bangor Crisis Intervention Team, Technical Exploration Center, the Aroostook Medical Center, The Charlotte White Center, Maine

Mental Health Connections, and Community Health and Counseling Services. In addition, DDPC was represented by several of its departments: Nutrition Services; The Library; Nursing; The Wilson Treatment Mall; and Outpatient Services.

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Free Health Assessment

Offered - Fully aligned with DHHS' mission of living healthy, safe and productive lives, Maine State Government now offers those who are covered by the State Employee Health Plan an opportunity for a free health assessment.

Employees and their family members can take the WebMD® Health Assessment on anthem.com. The assessment is an online survey that takes about 15-20 minutes to complete. Within minutes of answering the questions, survey takers get a report that compares how their health stacks up against people just like them. Results of the Health Assessment are confidential and no one will see them without authoriza-

tion. Those who take the survey by **December 15** will receive a free headset radio, courtesy of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

To take the assessment, visit Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Web site at www.anthem.com and follow the steps to register for MyAnthem. After registering, click on the MyHealth tab, then select Health Assessment. Once you complete the survey, Anthem will automatically be notified to send the free gift by mail.

* * *

How Could We Forget? OIAS Deputy Director Named

Last month, the In Focus staff was informed that Thomas H. Keyes was named the new Deputy Director for the Office of Integrated Access and Support. Regretfully, we did not make this announcement in last month's newsletter. Tom brings more than 30 years of experience to this new job, ranging from mental health, social services, public welfare, technology and operations. A belated congratulations, Tom.

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New MaineCare Finance

Director - Congratulations to Colin Lindley, who was appointed as the Director of MaineCare Finance on October 30. This is a unique appointment, as Colin will oversee the work of some of the Department of Health and Human Services' Service Center staff, while also working with the group previously known as OMS Finance, formerly supervised by Rob Boschen. Deputy of Finance Kirsten Figueroa described this move as "exciting and positive, as it will integrate the knowledge, skill and effort of both units, in order to support

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MaineCare Finance.” In the short-term, Colin will be doing double duty, covering his old position in the Service Center until that position has been filled.

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Weather-Related Office Closings and Delayed Openings

Openings - Occasionally during the winter, state government offices may close or delay opening when travel conditions are very poor. If travel conditions look doubtful, there are several ways for you to find out if your office opening is delayed or if work is canceled. Multiple television and radio stations are notified of delays or cancellations between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m., and will share that information during their broadcasts. For a complete listing of those stations, visit <http://inet.state.me.us/dafs/policies/delayworkday.html>. If you have internet access at home, you can visit www.maine.gov and click on the “Citizen Alert System” icon at the top of the page, where delays or cancellations will be posted. The Department of Health and Human Services will also maintain and publicize local phone lines that employees can call to obtain closing/delayed opening information. For employees who work in the Augusta area, that number is 287-5648. If you work outside the Augusta area, check with your supervisor for the number available for you.

* * *

Some Perfect Pairs for Head Start Children

- “It’s a good thing I’m sitting down!” That was the response of Barbara Buck, the Head Start Holiday Party Coordinator, when she learned that the Department of Health and Human Services knitters had made more than 200 pair of mit-

tens in support of the Head Start Holiday Party, scheduled for December 14. State government hosts this annual holiday party for Head Start children, who receive a brand new pair of warm mittens along with toys and books donated to the cause. Party coordinators are always looking for volunteers donate yarn, knit mittens or make monetary

contributions to the event. In response to Commissioner Harvey’s suggestion that staff participate in a mitten-knitting drive, more than 30 members of the Department’s staff from across the state rose to the challenge. At last count, 225 pairs of mittens were collected and forwarded for the party. Thanks to all those who

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Steve Haywood, the Employment Development Coordinator for the High Hopes Clubhouse and Christine Dunbar, Director of the Capital Club, were two of the participants in Riverview Psychiatric Center’s Friends and Family event on October 17.

Riverview Psychiatric Center Hosts Friends and Family

On Tuesday, October 17, two years after replacing the 164-year-old Augusta Mental Health Institute, Riverview Psychiatric Center (RPC) hosted a celebration to mark the anniversary and to thank those who have supported its initiatives along the way.

“It was an opportunity to thank all the family members, friends, community providers and our patients for all the generous support they have provided,” said David Proffitt, Riverview’s Superintendent. “It is their continued involvement in the lives of people with mental illness that helps them move successfully back into the community.”

The celebration featured refreshments, along with entertainment by Emerald Sky, a Maine band. Informational booths were also set up by various mental health organizations, including the National Alliance for Mental Illness Maine, Co-Occurring/Psychology, High Hopes Clubhouse, Capitol Clubhouse and Amistad Social Club.

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donated yarn and knitted mittens. State employees who wish to join the fun on the 14th of December are invited to the Head Start Party at the Augusta Armory on Water Street in Augusta beginning at 10 a.m.

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MSECCA Update – Friday, November 24, marked the close of the Maine State Employees' Combined Charitable Appeal annual drive. The statewide goal this year is \$450,000. At the deadline of *In Focus*, state employees had pledged \$344,734. The Department of Health and Human Services' goal was \$55,000, and as of deadline date, \$44,425, or 81 percent of the goal had been reached. Though the campaign has concluded, pledges and gifts are accepted all year long. Please consider making your charitable donation, as a little from each really does add up to a lot.

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Director for Claims

Division – Robin Chacon joined the Office of MaineCare Services in October as the Director for the Division of Claims. Robin is a former Vice President at MBNA and has worked in many of their most complicated divisions.

* * *

Powell New CON Unit

Manager – Phyllis Powell was recently hired as the Manager of the Certificate of Need Unit within the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. She has previous experience with New Hampshire's Certificate of Need program, as well as mental health and substance abuse program experience. Prior to this new position, Powell was the Development Director for a New Hampshire Community Action Program.



The Directors of Integrated Services Offices, Regional Office Managers, Deputy Sabra Burdick and Commissioner Brenda Harvey take a moment for a photo during last month's meetings.

Work Sessions Define Roles, Produce Plans to Put in Practice

Integrated Services Office Directors and Regional Office Managers gathered last month to participate in daylong meetings to discuss a variety of topics.

Aided by an outside facilitator, the first day's discussions helped clarify the roles of those working in the organization and the roles of the leadership team. Day Two's work offered some exercises in practicality. The group discussed how it would cultivate a unified approach to helping the Department of Health and Human Services meet its mission and achieve the Departmental outcomes of high-performing staff; excellent provider partnerships; integrated services; superior customer service; and efficient and effective communications.

In the process, the team worked toward solving challenges in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. Some TANF recipients have multiple barriers to overcome and clearly, they are the most difficult to move forward toward independence and away from public assistance. Director of the Office of Integrated Access and Support, Barbara Van Burgel, was excited by the level of energy and enthusiasm around this issue. Progress has been made in this arena since the workshop. Regional Office Managers have each picked three cases to review in order to study various systemic and cultural problems, and brainstorm ways to better serve these clients.

"The System Integration Directors are working with the managers to determine what some options may be," VanBurgel said. "We will pull in other parts of the departments where necessary. This is an exciting project and we hope that through this effort, we will be able to develop a problem-solving strategy that will guide us. All agreed that as a Department, we should be able to work together to provide some solutions."

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are here and are a part of the celebration.”

Marriner said that the Department currently has 2,280 children in foster care and has established a goal of 580 adoptions this year. At this point, 330 children have families that are willing to adopt, leaving 150 children still in need.

“Most of those are older children,” Marriner said. “When we look at our current statistics, 111 children have

been waiting more than a year to be adopted.”

Monday’s event was the second of many planned during the month. On November 4, the Department collaborated with A Family for Me, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative and other community organizations, to arrange for 100 adoptive, foster, kinship family members and youth in care to attend a University of Maine football game. Pre-game recognition, food,

and time to visit with UMO football players were all part of the event.

On November 16, an Adoption Awareness Tea took place at the Blaine House, with First Lady Karen Baldacci leading the festivities. On November 18, courthouses around the nation participated in National Adoption Day. At York County District Court in Alfred, Judge Robert Nedeau led the adoption proceedings for several families.

Surviving Holiday Stress—Some Practical Tips

For many, the joy of the holiday season melts away like an icicle on a sunny winter day, replaced by long to-do lists and a busy social calendar. It is a challenge to fend off stress during the holiday season, which usually comes from a lack of time to do everything that we want to do. Here are a few tips that might help to prioritize, slow down and enjoy the moments and make the most of this time of year. Here are a few tips that might help you prioritize, enjoy the moments and make the most of this time of year.

Set goals and prioritize. Make a list of the activities you want to do this holiday season and get out your calendar. Avoid over-booking – pick the most important events and tasks and schedule plenty of time to enjoy them. Schedule some “down time” before and after as well, so there’s no rushing from one thing to another. If you can put off some activities until after the New Year, do it. This will lighten your holiday load.

Get organized and simplify. Reduce some pressure by taking turns driving children to various activities; make lists of things to do/buy/attend and check things off when they’re done. Purchasing baked goods from bake sales can help support a local cause and reduce the time you spend in the kitchen at the same time. Combine tasks and purposes like this wherever you can.

Take care of yourself. Make time to stay at home. Set aside quiet time to enjoy decorations, family and the reasons for the season. Renew or refresh your spiritual connections. Holiday movies and music can enhance enjoyment of the season. Schedule some time for a self-nurturing treatment such as a manicure or massage, a visit to the theater or concert, or a visit to a favorite restaurant.

Remember to keep to keep a commitment to healthy behaviors, including exercise, nutritious eating and drinking plenty of water.

Stay connected. With help from the family, organize some family activities or a special outing; start or renew a family tradition; share and celebrate each other’s gifts – those that are on the inside.

Give. Donate items to special causes; volunteer your time to a needy organization; compliment and celebrate those you care for. Smile. Say “thank you” for the simplest things. Call a friend you haven’t talked to in a while; host a dinner party; appreciate what you have.

IN THE NEW YEAR:

So once you’ve survived the holidays, some early planning in the new year can help alleviate issues down the road. Here are some practical reminders:

Schedule an annual physical, eye exam and dental appointment. Stock first-aid supplies at home and in the car; throw away outdated medicine. If you have pets, schedule their annual veterinary appointments as well.

Inventory safety plans for home and work fire escape routes; check the batteries in your smoke detector(s); have the furnace, fireplace, and gas appliances inspected.

Stay financially fit. Balance the checkbook and set a budget for the coming year; establish financial parameters for next year’s holiday giving and set a plan to pay off current debt.

Explore new things. Visit an art gallery or museum; learn more about other holiday traditions; take an international cooking or baking course.

For Your Health - Seasonal Flu Update

As you may already know, several Employee Flu Shot Clinics were postponed in November due to a slowdown in the delivery of flu vaccine. The good news is that as of the In Focus deadline, no influenza had been seen in Maine this season. Typically, influenza usually does not peak until sometime between late December and April. Because the body starts building immunity to influenza just after receiving the vaccine, it is never too late to get immunized.

As soon as employee clinics are rescheduled, information will be forwarded to staff. In the meantime, everyone, particularly those at high risk of contracting influenza, is encouraged to seek a flu shot from their primary care physician or a flu shot clinic nearby if possible.

Those in high-risk groups for severe disease include: children 6–59 months (6 months – 6 years); anyone 50 years and older; pregnant women; persons of any age with certain chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and heart disease; persons living with or caring for people at high-risk; and health care workers.

The Maine CDC has ordered 158,000 doses of vaccine and is currently distributing its first batches of vaccine primarily for children and high-risk adults in public health and high-risk settings, such as nursing homes and homeless clinics.

There are several ways to obtain a flu shot. Primary health care providers and the Anthem worksite flu clinics are two sources. Additionally, a number of home

health care agencies and hospitals are providing flu vaccine clinics that are often advertised in local newspapers. A number of clinics are held in supermarkets and other businesses. The schedule for some of these can be found at www.find-aflushot.com or www.flucliniclocator.com.

Finally, it is important for all to remember the three basic hygiene steps of covering sneezes and coughs with a sleeve or a tissue, frequent hand-washing and staying home when ill.

Hygiene campaign materials and other information are available at www.maine flu.gov, <http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/pdf/work.pdf>; and http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/pdf/covercough_school11x17.pdf.

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that a permanent home can bring to foster children.

"We just felt a need to provide them with a permanent home," Gibbons said. "We have noticed that since we made the decision, they have been more content, more at peace and have a feeling that they belong. In many ways, I wish we had done it sooner."

Today, the Gibbons Family includes an older son, John Gibbons; Fred, Adrian and Angel, age four, who was adopted four months ago. In addition, Fred and Adrian's brother Chris, one of the two older twins, is in foster care with the family. He suffers from Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism where the child has fewer developmental delays.

"They really all love each other like brothers and sisters," said Cindy. "It's that, plus the tender moments, that make everything worthwhile."

After the adoption on Tuesday, Fred and Adrian returned to Open Bible Baptist Academy, continuing what has been a very successful high school year. But on that day, there may have been a little extra spring in their steps, a little brighter smile, for they had found a home.

"These guys are so awesome – who wouldn't want them?" Cindy said. "They are so appreciative of everything and they are so much more of a help than a bother. At this point, we don't know what we'd do without them."

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respect, fondness, and loyalty I had always felt for my regional staff.

In the past 10 years, I've noticed many instances where someone in the Regional Offices referred to Central Office in a disrespectful or blameful manner. These exchanges almost always fostered separation and created barriers for the implementation of services. Having hands-on experience with Central Office staff and seeing how very hard people work, the long hours they put in, the pressures they are under given their positions and experiencing how helpful and kind they are gave me an even greater appreciation of them as people. It showed me how much we have in common regardless of where we work.

Thankfully, I now have a much wider lens from which to view our work. My discussions in the Region since coming back to be the Director of System Integration have changed significantly as a result. I find many opportunities to discuss our work in the context of being a team, with no separation of Central and Region.

It appears to me that more Department of Health and Human Services staff feels unified for many reasons. I hope my experience will add to this growing momentum, as we continue to strengthen the bonds between regions, program areas and Central Office.



The Department of Health and Human Services **WELCOMES**

The following individuals have joined DHHS recently as either new employees filling vacant positions, or former employees returning to state service. We enjoyed welcoming them at New Employee Orientation earlier this month. Please welcome your new colleagues at DHHS:

Michael Anderson	Guy Cousins	Wendy Malinowski
Brenda Baker	Gerald Day	Amy Mehuren
Donna Bernier	Sarah A. Dionne	Christine Merchant
Gerard Biron	Angela Elsemore	Alyssa Morrison
S. Austen Bourassa	Barbara Fenlason	Phyllis Powell
Nora Bowne	Karen Fitzmaurice	Nicole Rooney
Brenda Buccellato	Marlene Flood	Jonathan Shumeyko
Cindy Carney	Dawn Gallagher	Christine Streeter
Robin Chacon	Patricia Hanrahan	Helen Towne
Donald Chamberlain	Joanne Hatch	Ronald Welch
Kathleen Conway	Gary Kromer	Nicole Wells
Marie Cook	Becky Kuvaja	Melissa Winchenbach
Ann Crafts	Pamela Labbe	
Denise Costello	Nancy Lamare	

OCTOBER *Retirements*

Marjorie D. Closson

OCTOBER *Promotions*

Sharon A Arsenault	Lori L Hill
Sherry A Baldwin	Heather D House
Robert L Blanchard Jr	Leticia Huttman
Sheila L Bosse	Carlton R Lewis
Cheryl A Burns	Colin D Lindley
Trudy J Caouette	Darren L Morgan
Sandra A Chandonnet	Dorothy E Pratt
June G Cloutier	Springer, Patricia A
Leigh T Cotnoir	Ann L Verrill
Denise M Dagle	Rebecca J Walter
Donna M Esterline-Johnson	Chrissanda P Welch,
Sharon L Foss	Devin Welch
Andrea J Goodwin	
Randall J Hadsell	
Carlene R Hamlin	

* * NOTE * *

Names of new employees, retirees and promotions are obtained from electronic human resource systems. Names may be inadvertently omitted if personnel changes take place between the time information is gathered and the publication of In Focus.

First Lady Pays a Visit

First Lady Karen Baldacci stopped by the Central Office at the Department of Health and Human Services recently and visited with Commissioner Brenda Harvey. The two look over the quilt made by the Commissioner, which captures many of the landmarks and activities in Aroostook County.

